

FREE PRINTABLE • TIDBITANDCO.COM

Skincare Order of Application

What goes on first, what goes on last, and why it matters. Tape it inside the bathroom cabinet. The order is thinnest to thickest, every time, with sunscreen last in the morning.

Morning	AM	Night	PM
1 Cleanse OR JUST WATER Lukewarm. If your skin is dry, rinsing is enough in the morning.		1 Take off the day FIRST CLEANSE A balm or oil cleanser to lift sunscreen and makeup. Skip only if you wore neither.	
2 Toner or essence OPTIONAL A hydrating one. Anything that leaves skin tight is doing the wrong job.		2 Cleanse SECOND CLEANSE The actual wash, on clean-ish skin, which is why it finally works.	
3 Antioxidant serum Vitamin C sits here. On dry skin, before anything heavier goes over it.		3 Toner or essence OPTIONAL Hydrating, to give the next step something to sink into.	
4 Eye cream OPTIONAL Ring finger, pressed not rubbed, on the bone rather than the lid.		4 Treatment ONE, NOT BOTH A retinoid or an exfoliating acid. Never the two on the same night. On dry skin.	
5 Moisturizer Seals in everything underneath it. On slightly damp skin it works harder.		5 Eye cream OPTIONAL Same as the morning.	
6 Sunscreen ALWAYS LAST SPF 30 or higher, over the moisturizer, never stirred into it. Reapply if you are outside.		6 Moisturizer Heavier at night is fine. This is what stops a retinoid from turning into a problem.	
		7 Face oil or balm LAST Optional, and genuinely last, because nothing gets through it afterwards.	

THE SEVEN RULES THAT COVER ALMOST EVERYTHING

- **Thinnest to thickest, always.** Water-based before oil-based. A thick cream under a watery serum means the serum never reaches skin.
- **Sunscreen is the last morning step.** Over the moisturizer, not mixed into it, and not replaced by the SPF in your foundation.
- **Give each layer about a minute.** Stacking wet on wet just dilutes everything into one expensive puddle.
- **Retinoid and acids on different nights.** Vitamin C in the morning and a retinoid at night sidesteps the question completely.
- **Actives on dry skin, hydrators on damp skin.** Damp skin absorbs more, which is a good thing for a hydrator and a bad one for a strong active.
- **One new product at a time, for two weeks.** Start three at once and you will never know which one your skin objected to.
- **If you only do one thing, do the sunscreen.** It is the step with the clearest evidence behind it, by a wide margin.

WRITE IT DOWN ONCE

Your Routine, On Paper

Fill in what you actually own against each step. Blanks are fine, and most good routines have several. Then use the tracker underneath when you add something new.

MORNING

Cleanse	
Toner	
Serum	
Eye	
Moisturizer	
SPF	

NIGHT

First cleanse	
Cleanse	
Toner	
Treatment	
Eye	
Moisturizer	

ADDING SOMETHING NEW • ONE PRODUCT, TWO WEEKS, THEN THE NEXT

WEEK	PRODUCT ADDED	NIGHTS PER WEEK	HOW YOUR SKIN REACTED
1 & 2			
3 & 4			
5 & 6			
7 & 8			

Do not pair on the same night

- Retinoid **and** an AHA or BHA acid
- Two different exfoliating acids
- Benzoyl peroxide **and** a retinoid
- A strong active **and** a physical scrub

Alternate nights instead. Irritated skin is not skin that is working harder.

Signs you went too fast

- Stinging that does not settle in a minute
- Flaking around the nose and mouth
- Skin that suddenly reacts to products it was fine with
- Tightness after washing

Stop the actives, use a plain moisturizer and sunscreen for a week, and reintroduce one thing.